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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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### MEETING MINUTES

December 13, 2011 | 7:30 p.m.

**Commissioners:** Daphne Collins (Chair), Chris Steele (Vice Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Barry Abramson, Jane Ives, Peter Lew, Ron Lipof, Joyce Moss, John Pears

**Staff:** Candace Havens, Amanda Stout, Shawna Sullivan (Clerk to the Long-Range Planning Committee)

**Guests:** Ald. Susan Albright, Ald. Lisle Baker, Ald. Vicki Danberg, Ald. Ruthanne Fuller, Ald. Jay Harney, Ald. Stephen Linsky, Bill Renke, Lynn Slobodin, Lynne Sweet

**Absent:** David Abromowitz, Chuck Eisenberg, Robert Gifford, Philip Plottel, Darryl Settles

Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

Candace Havens  
Director  
Planning & Development

Amanda Stout  
Senior Economic  
Development Planner

Commissioners

Daphne Collins, Chair  
Christopher Steele,  
Vice Chair  
Jack Leader, Secretary

Barry Abramson  
David Abromowitz  
Charles Eisenberg  
Robert Gifford  
Jane Ives  
Peter Kai Jung Lew  
Ronald Lipof  
Joyce Moss  
John R.A. Pears  
Philip Plottel  
Darryl Settles

#### 1. Subcommittee on Existing Business Support

- Collins reported that she, Steele, and Stout have held several meetings with local business owners and received feedback. They have met with Hipstitch, Stoddard's Cutlery, New England Mobile Bookfair, Bocca Bella Café, and Bread and Chocolate, and plan to meet with Green Planet Kids and other businesses soon. A written summary of feedback will be compiled and presented to the EDC for discussion. This effort is in parallel to the Mayor's business outreach initiatives.

#### 2. Subcommittee on Business Attraction

- Steele reported that subcommittee members are speaking with real estate brokers and builders. They will be compiling data and information for a report on the results of their discussions.

#### 3. Old Business: Riverside Letter

- Once the Commission had reached quorum at 7:45 p.m., Collins reopened the November discussion of the letter from the EDC to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen regarding the development proposal on Riverside Station that was presented by Normandy on October 6, 2011. At the November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, the EDC requested that Havens present the finalized letter and deliver it to the Mayor and President Lennon for review before sending it. Before this happened, however, Docket Item 400-11 was submitted. Collins determined that the situation had changed significantly in light of the docket item and recommended that (1) the November letter be withdrawn and (2) the EDC discuss a revised letter that would solely address the docket item.

- Collins read aloud Docket Item 400-11 and requested that the evening's discussion and the EDC letter be a direct response to this item, rather than a general commentary on the site.

- Collins read aloud a draft letter and opened discussion of the letter.

- The letter is addressed to Mayor Setti Warren, President of the Board Scott Lennon, and the Board of Aldermen. The Commission discussed which additional parties should be included in the carbon-copy (CC) of the letter. The EDC chose to limit the letter to those who are under their chartered advisory responsibility.

- Motion to limit the carbon-copy (CC) of the letter to the three Aldermen-Elect (David Kalis, Marc Laredo, and Greg Schwartz) and Candace Havens, Director of the**

**Planning and Development Department. Motion approved (8-1, Abramson seconded by Pears; Lew opposed).**

- Havens noted that there would be two Public Hearings, each of which might be open for multiple days, as part of the Zoning and Planning Committee's consideration of the zoning for the site and subsequently as part of the Land Use Committee's consideration of a Special Permit application.
- The Commission discussed numbers and wording in the letter.
- **Motion to approve the letter given changes agreed to at the meeting and pending final analysis of the numbers on the table by Steele and Abramson. Motion approved (9-0, Steele seconded by Lew).**

#### **4. Business Incubator Initiative**

- Lipof reported that he has communicated with the Suffolk University JD/MBA entrepreneurship program regarding having the class study a small business incubator for Newton as their spring semester project. Lipof had a very positive experience with students from this same program who studied his business. The EDC would create a scope of work and begin working with the students in January and February.
- **Motion to pursue the small business incubator initiative with Suffolk University. Motion approved (9-0, Steele seconded by Pears).**

#### **5. Post Office Letters**

- Collins reported that five Post Office branches in the City (Boston College, Nonantum, Lower Falls, Upper Falls, and West Newton) are among those branches being considered for closure by the federal government. Collins presented a draft letter from the EDC to be sent to Patrick R. Donahoe, Postmaster General of the United States Postal Service, Senator Scott Brown, Senator John Kerry, and Congressman Barney Frank. The letter opposes the proposed closings and argues that these Post Office branches are important to the economic and social fabric of Newton's village centers.
- **Motion to approve the letters opposing closure of five Post Office branches in Newton. Motion approved (9-0, Lew seconded by Lipof).**

#### **6. EDC Business**

- Collins requested that Meeting Minutes be sent to the Commission in a more timely fashion.
- **Motion to approve the November 8<sup>th</sup> EDC Meeting Minutes with minor changes from Collins. Motion approved (8-0-1, Lew seconded by Steele; Moss abstained).**
- Moss resigned her position on the Commission, as she was recently elected as Chair of the Planning and Development Board.
- Moss inquired about the status of the item requesting review of the parking meter time limits in Newton Centre. Collins said that Ald. Vicki Danberg agreed to docket this item to Traffic Council.
- Collins reminded the Commission that a Joint Meeting with the Board of Aldermen had been scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2012.

#### **7. Joint Meeting with the Long-Range Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen: EDSAT**

- At approximately 9:10 p.m. the Commission opened a Joint Meeting with the Long-Range Planning Committee, chaired by Ald. Stephen Linsky and joined by Aldermen Albright, Baker, Danberg, and Fuller. Stout presented an update on the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) and distributed copies of the final draft responses. Stout said she would appreciate hearing any comments or suggestions from Aldermen and Commissioners by Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. If significant issues remained, they would be discussed in January, but if the minor comments could be addressed, the Planning Department aimed to submit the survey by the end of the year.
- Additional report: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/LongRange/2011/12-13-11LongRangePlanningReport.pdf>

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP, Sr. Economic Development Planner